

Center for Environmental Finance Newsletter

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of the Chief Financial Officer



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About the CEF

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Center for Environmental Finance (CEF) Quarterly Newsletter. Through this communication, we will share news and information covering the projects and activities of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's (OCFO) Environmental Finance Program. The CEF is responsible for managing the Environmental Financial Advisory Board (EFAB), an independently and federally chartered advisory committee, and the Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN), a grant program.

Both the EFAB and the EFCN provide unique services to the nation in terms of helping communities find ways to pay for environmental programs and creating incentives that promote environmental stewardship. Together, within the Environmental Finance Program, these entities seek to lower costs, increase investment, and build capacity by creating partnerships with state and local governments and the private sector to fund environmental needs.

EFAB was established in 1989 to advise EPA on environmental financing challenges facing the nation. The Board is composed of approximately 30 members appointed by the Deputy Administrator, representing state and local governments; the banking, finance, and legal communities; business and industry, academia, and nonprofit environmental organizations.

The EFCN, composed of ten centers located throughout the nation, is the only university-based organization in the country that provides innovative solutions to communities to help manage the cost of environmental protection. The network works with both the public and private sectors to promote a sustainable environment by addressing the difficult issue of how to pay. The Centers are located at the following universities:

- University of Southern Maine
- Syracuse University
- University of Maryland
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Louisville

- Cleveland State University
- New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
- Wichita State University
- Dominican University of California
- Boise State University

This first issue includes two articles, one about an EFAB report to the Agency on an innovative financing mechanism called Voluntary Environmental Improvement Bonds (VEIBs), and the other about a new green building into which the Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center recently moved. We hope you enjoy this and future issues and your comments are welcome. Please visit us at <http://www.epa.gov/efinpage>.

Syracuse EFC Moves into New Green Building

In January, the Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at Syracuse University moved into the Syracuse Center of Excellence (Syracuse CoE) Headquarters Building, a state-of-the-art green office building in Syracuse, New York. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating for this 5 story building is expected to be platinum. In addition to providing space for the EFC, this building provides offices, classrooms, public spaces, and research labs for Syracuse CoE and its academic and industry partners. The building has many features that help reduce its environmental impact and create an indoor environment that is good for the health of its occupants. Environmental contamination associated with previous industrial uses of the three-acre construction site, which was designated as a "brownfield," was remediated before construction began.

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The green features of the building include photovoltaic panels that enable it to generate its own electricity and extensive window panels providing natural light to occupants in most of the indoor spaces. In addition, ventilation below the foundation prevents underground vapors from entering the building, eliminating a potential source of contaminants in indoor air. The building provides a good example of how other similar buildings could be constructed for the benefit of the environment and public health. A ribbon cutting ceremony will take place in March 2010. The EFC is online at

<http://efc.syracusecoecoe.org/>.

VEIB Reports Well Received by the Agency

The Environmental Financial Advisory Board (EFAB) was pleased to receive positive feedback from the EPA on two reports recently released to the Agency examining an innovative environmental finance concept called Voluntary Environmental Improvement Bonds (VEIBs). These reports present a concept and implementation plan for a VEIB program that can be used by homeowners to finance the installation of solar panels and other property improvements. This program has the potential to recruit thousands of citizens to the cause of reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and it supports Administrator Jackson's priorities of taking action on climate change and improving air quality.

In addition to solar panels, other installations that VEIBs can be used to finance include: insulation, energy efficient water heaters, and wood stoves certified by EPA as having reduced particulate emissions. In the reports, EFAB highly commended the VEIB concept to EPA and made specific recommendations for the Agency to encourage states and local governments to adopt VEIB programs. In response to these recommendations, the EPA Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) has committed to exploring the potential of VEIBs to finance a variety of environmental programs, including the replacement of wood stoves with EPA-certified devices. The reports are available online at <http://www.epa.gov/efinpage/publications/VoluntaryEnviroImprovementBondsReports.pdf>.

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The new green building that houses the
Syracuse Environmental Finance Center

“This program has the potential to recruit thousands of citizens to the cause of reducing greenhouse gas emissions”

Upcoming Events:

Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities (CIFA) Federal Policy Conference, April 26-27, Washington, DC, see <http://www.cifanet.org/conferences.html>

Environmental Finance Center Seminar Series at EPA in Washington, DC, featuring:
Boise State University EFC (April 28)
University of North Carolina EFC (May 12)

Syracuse Environmental Finance Center Event, Smart Management for Small Communities, April 20-22, Blue Mountain Lake, NY, see <http://efc.syracusecoecoe.org/>.

